



# Pinewood School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 117664  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280125  
**Inspection dates** 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Margaret Goodchild LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Hoe Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community special		SG12 9PB
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01920 412211
<b>Number on roll</b>	156	<b>Fax number</b>	01920 411100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. John Creasey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Graham Rodbard

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	6 February 2006 - 7 February 2006	280125

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a special school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The vast majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties; a small number have autistic spectrum disorders and additional emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils have statements of special educational needs and join the school with attainment which is particularly low. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and there are nearly three times as many boys as girls. Pupils come from far a field: from Essex and North London boroughs as well as from Hertfordshire.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school evaluates its own effectiveness to be good and inspection findings support this overall judgement. Nearly all pupils leave with some form of externally recognised qualification, including a vocational award through the good opportunities they are given to attend college in Years 10 and 11. The pupils themselves are in many ways the school's greatest strength. They are polite, friendly and enthusiastic. The school cares well for them and matches its curriculum increasingly effectively to their needs and interests. Teaching is good overall but teachers are inconsistent in planning to meet the needs of individual pupils and expectations for what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Lessons are generally planned more thoroughly in Years 10 and 11, where teachers are assisted by the guidelines provided by the courses that pupils follow, than they are in Years 7 to 9. The school is led and managed effectively and has made good improvement in areas identified for development by the last inspection. The imminent retirement of the long-serving headteacher and a number of other staff who hold key responsibilities brings with it some uncertainty and means that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. The school gives good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that work is consistently matched to the next steps in learning for individual pupils and that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations about pupils' potential.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and most reach challenging individual targets. Standards are well below average as a result of pupils' learning difficulties but over time, it is clear that standards are rising. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make their best progress in science, although they do increasingly well in English and mathematics. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Pupils are now developing literacy skills more effectively than they were at the time of the last inspection, and the individual reading programme has enabled many to make better progress than expected. The school has been working to raise standards in writing and this has begun to bear fruit, especially in Years 10 and 11 where some pupils have produced impressive pieces of written coursework. Practically all of the Year 11 pupils who left school in 2005 gained some nationally recognised qualifications, around half in five or more subjects. Nearly all pupils were also successful in the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network) Youth Award Scheme. All Year 11 pupils went on to further education, training or employment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are genuine ambassadors for the school. They are polite, friendly and enthusiastic. Nearly all pupils get on well together and enjoy trusting relationships with the staff. They feel able to talk to an adult if they are worried about anything, know how to stay safe and understand the importance of making healthy choices. There has been an increase in pupils opting to take part in after-school sports and all pupils do two hours of physical education a week. They have good attitudes to school, show an interest in learning and enjoy their lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and show care and respect for others. They value the community service award and, through citizenship, personal, social and health education and careers education, learn about their rights and responsibilities. Although there is no school council, pupils' ideas are listened to and a group of pupils recently contributed to the interview process for appointing a new headteacher. The school has rightly identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about enterprise, but they gain a range of important skills that should stand them in good stead for the future. These are the result of attending vocational courses and taking part in work experience, studying a personal finance module as part of the ASDAN course and the emphasis given to work-related skills in mathematics in Years 10 and 11. Behaviour is good and many pupils behave exceptionally well. There are few exclusions and pupils attend regularly. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good and their spiritual development is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school judges its teaching to be good and inspection findings support this. However, there is scope to improve teaching further. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well so that pupils learn in a calm, orderly environment. Teachers generally use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to support and stimulate pupils' learning. Where teaching is at its best, teachers encourage pupils to make decisions for themselves and to plan their learning, as in the ASDAN course in Years 10 and 11. Work in English in Years 10 and 11 shows that pupils have been given good opportunities to undertake written tasks that are appropriately matched to their prior learning. However, teachers do not consistently match work to the needs of different pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9. This is because their lesson planning is too brief and because they do not use assessment information enough from day to day to plan the next step in each pupil's learning. The school has identified the use of assessment in teaching as an area for development and this is key to raising pupils' achievement further. The school provides parents with thorough information about the topics their children will be studying each term. Some homework is set but teachers are inconsistent in the setting of homework and some parents would welcome more.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is effective and relevant to pupils' interests. There are well-established college links in Years 10 and 11, which cater equally for the minority of girls as well as those of boys. All pupils have opportunities to gain a vocational qualification from a choice of drama, hair and beauty, catering, construction, land studies and motor vehicle maintenance. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 now better reflects pupils' academic potential, with the introduction of GCSE in English, mathematics, science and art, as well as a range of other more basic courses. Opportunities for pupils to gain ICT skills through discrete lessons have improved since the last inspection. All pupils benefit greatly from the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme or Transition Challenge in Years 10 and 11, which supports their personal and academic achievement. Strong emphasis is placed on personal, social and health education and the school makes sure that pupils know how to live healthily and make choices that are likely to promote their safety. Pinewood is an active member of the School Sports Challenge Partnership and is working to increase the opportunities pupils have to take part in competitive sport. A wide range of clubs, visits, residential trips and other activities enriches pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' care, guidance and support are effective. The school takes good care of its pupils and makes sure that they are protected. Form tutors play a key role in this and the school has the extra support of a music therapist and counsellor, as well as working with a range of agencies. Behaviour is managed very effectively so that pupils are given a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Staff take an appropriately strong approach to bullying and listen carefully to pupils' concerns. As a result, the school is an orderly, purposeful place in which pupils feel secure to learn and develop. Strong links with local colleges and with the Connexions service support preparation for life after school, and careers guidance is well established. There is some good practice in the way pupils with additional learning needs are supported, for instance those with reading difficulties, but teaching assistants could sometimes make a bigger contribution to pupils' learning. The fact that they do not always do so is partly the result of insufficient planning by teachers. The school does not devise individual education plans for its pupils, although it does set targets for every pupil in each subject and all pupils in Years 10 and 11 have an individual progress plan setting out key priorities. Staff regularly review pupils' progress and pupils attend their own annual reviews, so that their views are taken into account. Teachers increasingly use assessment information to check whether pupils are making enough progress, but this is not linked as rigorously as it should be to the matching of work to the needs of individuals.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. It has made good improvement on most of the issues identified by the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The imminent retirement of a long-serving headteacher and a number of other members of staff in key posts necessarily brings some uncertainty, but the school has introduced important changes to the way that responsibilities are delegated in preparation for this. The team leaders for Years 8 and 9, and Years 10 and 11 are key to this preparation, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Both have appropriately high expectations and provide effective support to other staff. In the guidance that they provide to teachers and through analysing assessment information, they are working increasingly to ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are met. The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation are good. The introduction of a system for evaluating each subject is a very positive development that is providing valuable detail about how the school could improve further. Leadership of English and mathematics is particularly good; the school has rightly identified the need to develop further the leadership of design and technology, ICT, music and science. The checking of teaching and learning by senior staff is thorough, and teachers receive detailed feedback, but such monitoring does not have as much impact as it could on teachers' expectations throughout the school. The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's work. Governors visit the school regularly to check on its effectiveness and seek out the views of pupils and parents. The school conducts surveys of parents' views and takes these into account in its planning. Some parents feel that the school does not work as closely with them as it might. Inspection findings show that it involves parents reasonably well and most parents are satisfied with what the school has to offer. The school has good links with local further education colleges which are of direct benefit to the pupils; its links with local secondary schools and with its feeder primary schools are more limited. This has been identified, rightly, as an area for development. The school is suitably staffed and well resourced. Financial planning is thorough and resources are used well so that the school gives good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I am writing now to tell you about what I found. Your headteacher and the other people who run Pinewood believe that it is a good school and there are many things about it that are good. Perhaps the best thing of all is you: the pupils. I was impressed by how friendly, polite and helpful you are and it was lovely to hear what you think about the school. Overall, you achieve well in your time at Pinewood, especially in Years 10 and 11. This is because you have good opportunities to go to college and to gain a qualification that should help you when you leave school as well as following GCSE and other courses at school. The school cares for you well and behaviour is good, sometimes very good. Teaching is good overall but teachers do not always plan their lessons in enough detail to make sure that you all make progress as fast as you could, especially in Years 7 to 9. Go on enjoying your time at Pinewood, being kind to one another and doing your best.